



Strengthening northern New Mexico's tribal economies

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Over the past two years, Los Alamos National Laboratory has helped create two economic development initiatives that directly benefit northern New Mexico's Native American communities: (1) The Native American Venture Acceleration Fund (VAF), which awards investments for tribal economic development corporations and individual businesses in an effort to strengthen and diversify tribal economies and create jobs, and (2) the Northern New Mexico Tribal Business Scholarship, which provides scholarships to Native American undergraduate college students majoring in accounting, business administration, finance, management information systems or related fields.

The Northern New Mexico Tribal Business Scholarship is an important asset for New Mexico's tribal economies because until now most of the tribes have had to hire outside

talent instead of being able to rely on Native American business and accounting experts.

Thanks to my former career as a financial business analyst at the Laboratory and my previous responsibilities as governor of Ohkay Owingeh, I know from first-hand experience how much northern New Mexico's tribal communities need a solid business foundation and educated native talent base to adequately support and finance their community services and infrastructures, including tribal schools, police departments, senior citizen facilities and water and sewer systems.

I'm proud of the first two recipients of the Northern New Mexico Tribal Business Scholarship (see the [related article](#) in this issue), and I'm equally proud of the scholarship committee that has made the awards a reality. The committee is composed of a diverse group of tribal, Laboratory and LANL Foundation leaders who are committed to helping Native American students pursue business-type degrees and then use the acquired knowledge and skills to address their tribal communities' economic needs. This is a historic moment.

- *Earl Salazar*

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